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SUBJECT: TAIWAN RE-STAFFS THE IPR POLICE FORCE

REF: TAIPEI 1289

¶1. Taiwan's National Police Administration (NPA) has restored the IPR Police to full strength after reassigning 35 officers to address public security needs in summer 2005. According to IPR Police Commander Liao Kao-jiang, the IPR Police now has 208 full-time staff members plus 20 conscripts who are serving in the unit as an alternative to military service.

¶2. The IPR Police have offices in Taoyuan, Taichung, Jiayi, Kaohsiung, and Hualien in addition to its headquarters in Taipei. Commander Liao believes his team is now fully staffed and does not foresee any reductions in staffing in the near future.

¶3. Comment: The IPR Police Unit was created as an ad hoc task force in 2002 and established as a permanent unit in 2004 with a complement of 220 full time staff. However, normal rotations and a shortage of qualified personnel kept the unit staff at about 210-215 persons before the reassignment of 35 officers to public security duties last year. The IPR Police were not the only unit to suffer personnel cuts. The environmental protection police unit was reportedly completely disbanded to facilitate the transfer of staff to public security duties. In spite of reduced staff over the past year, the IPR Police have successfully conducted many investigations against optical media, branded goods, and pharmaceutical counterfeiters and have expanded their attention to on-line piracy. The restaffing to previous levels demonstrates Taiwan authorities continued determination to address intellectual property violations and should lead to increased enforcement actions in the next year. Reftel had recommended that IPR Police staffing be a topic in the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) discussions scheduled for May 25-26. In light of the restored staffing levels, we recommend this topic be dropped from the agenda. End Comment.

YOUNG